

**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
27 OCTOBER 2022**

THE NORTHGATE INITIATIVE

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report summarises the current position and developments of the Northgate Initiative.

Summary

2. The Northgate Initiative was established in 2019, to pilot collaborative multi-agency working in order to improve outcomes for local residents in all areas of wellbeing including economy, education and childhood, health, environment and social relationships.
3. There have been some measurable improvements since the start of the initiative towards the targets set for 2024, which has become more evident through the development of a data dashboard, specific to Northgate.
4. Strong management of the programme, through workstream lead meetings and focus groups, has had a positive impact on keeping the initiative and its outcomes reflective of the need in the area.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that this report is received for information and comment.

Seth Pearson
Director Darlington Partnerships

Background Papers

Northgate Initiative: Actions to Vision

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S17 Crime and Disorder	The initiative aims to improve community safety in the Northgate ward
Health and Well Being	The initiative aims to improve the health of the residents of Northgate ward

Carbon Impact and Climate Change	Home energy efficiency is a focus of the initiative
Diversity	No impact
Wards Affected	Northgate ward
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	Neighbourhood Renewal
Key Decision	none
Urgent Decision	none
Corporate Plan	This report details the work of the Northgate Initiative which is key element of the Council's plan to 'Work with communities to maximise their potential.
Efficiency	N/A
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Data Dashboard

6. In January 2022 the Steering Group agreed to set up a Data Dashboard to help analyse the impact of the Northgate Initiative and to identify any gaps where work needed to be increased or new actions be implemented to improve life of the Northgate residents. This has been undertaken using baseline data from 2018/19 up to and including the most up to date information available. (Appendix 1)
7. As a direct result of the implementation of the dashboard the focus and targets have changed slightly within each workstream to reflect the real needs of the area. This 'real-time' tool of analysing progression will create greater impact on the success of the initiative longer term.
8. This report provides a short synopsis of the achievements to date under each workstream and summarises the relevant data documented in the Data Dashboard for each area.

Childhood & Education

9. In the early stages of the Northgate Initiative a scoping exercise was carried out to identify the services available to residents of Northgate, this identified that there was a significant and diverse range of provision. However it also revealed typically low take up of services. In response a working group was set up with representation from Children's Services, Health Visitors, Safeguarding, the local schools and young people's engagement and justice service.

10. The idea of creating a community Family Hub was developed, which will provide a means of alternative approaches to service delivery, underpinned by the principles of community involvement in the heart of the community based initially at Corporation Road Primary.
11. Another focus was the transition from Primary to Secondary Education. Schools are now working together much more closely and the transition process is starting much earlier, as the primary and secondary schools work in partnership beyond previous transition periods. Secondary staff and children are maintaining contact with the primary teachers to assist with overcoming any challenges and barriers to their education journey. This is an ongoing town wide piece of work.
12. There was also a change in focus for this workstream, with an aim to help families at a much earlier stage, meaning social service intervention is not required.
13. The number of Early Help referrals in Northgate has increased over the duration of the initiative, resulting in a decrease in social service referrals meaning intervention is occurring much earlier and families are being supported, the much higher level support from social service intervention is not needed.
14. In relation to the data dashboard, due to covid it has been difficult to obtain education data, this will hopefully improve as assessments have been taking place as normal in 2021/2022.
15. However, data indicates there is correlation between poor attendance and low attainment resulting in young people being more likely to struggle to progress from school to college, employment, apprenticeships. The work of Youth Employment UK will help to address this issue in the form of a digital hub which will provide a one stop shop for education, support and advice.
16. Levelling Up Darlington specifically aims to “improve the prospects of young people from deprived communities through better qualifications, aspirations and confidence”, this is one of three priorities of the plan.
17. Both primary and secondary schools in the area are working to improve attendance figures, addressing persistent absentees and reducing fixed term exclusions.

Environment

18. Community Safety has provided services and support to the community through:
 - a) targeted patrols (Civic Enforcement)
 - b) proactive investigation and support concerning environmental crime and anti-social behaviour (Civic Enforcement)
 - c) community engagement activities (Community Resilience Officer)

A range of key developments have been delivered since 2019 including:

- a) The introduction and delivery of an Environmental Crime Plan
- b) The introduction and delivery of a Responsible Dog Ownership Plan

Deliverables:

- Rapid removal of graffiti.
 - Design of community murals (in development).
 - Provision of skips.
 - Defensive planting.
 - Installations of decorative trellis (replacing wire or glass)
 - Deployment of 4 dedicated CCTV mobile cameras.
19. There was a rise from 396 fly tips in 2019 to 420 in 2020 which could be explained by closure of the Recycling Centre. However, post covid there have been fewer fly tips and more cleared, indicating this issue has been successfully addressed and maintained, with 275 fly tips reported in 2021.
 20. Total reported environmental anti-social behaviour incidents have declined which demonstrates a positive outcome primarily from measures taken earlier in the initiative at North Lodge Park, such as removal of large bushes, opening up of walk ways, better lighting and installation of CCTV.
 21. The main aim is to sustain the level of environmental related service in Northgate to ensure North Lodge Park in maintained to its current standard. The timely response to fly tips is maintained alongside the current level of street/back lane cleanliness.

Housing

22. An operational focus was developed in Northgate in the beginning, which included supporting Housing in the delivery of the Next Steps project to reduce the number of empty properties in Northgate. DBC purchased 4 long-term empty properties in the Northgate area, providing up to 8 separate units of accommodation for individuals/families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Partnership work with the 700 club has helped residents to move into independent living from these properties.
23. There has been a reduction in the total number of empty properties in the Northgate ward. An overall total of 173 properties were empty in January 2020 decreasing to 159 in June 2022. This includes the number of properties empty for over six months, as figures saw a reduction from 111 properties in January 2020 to 95 in June 2022. In addition the number of properties which have been empty for more than two years has also decreased, from 33 in January 2020 to 32 in June 2022.
24. 79%, which equates to 1,286 properties with EPC certificates in Northgate are below a Band C, this has reduced from 82% (1,544 properties) at the start of the project.

25. Specialist training undertaken by Private Sector Housing Officers to support enforcement of problematic landlords, is now being used to hold landlords to account on providing decent standards of living to tenants.

Crime & Security

26. Policing within the Northgate area is part of the police daily activity. This initiative has created opportunities to adapt police approaches to tackle longer term issues in a more strategic, problem solving manner. There has been a clear increase in proactive patrols and engagement, as the Northgate area remains high on daily neighbourhood team briefings.
27. £298,918 of Home Office Safer Streets funding has been secured to introduce target-hardening of area which has resulted in:
 - (a) 416 properties visited by police regarding crime prevention advice / guidance
 - (b) 110 properties received target-hardening measures
 - (c) 18 properties have had trellis fitted
 - (d) 44 residents have received crime prevention packs.
28. As the Data Dashboard demonstrates all crime in the Northgate area has declined, but criminal activity is still more likely to take place in Northgate than other areas of Darlington. The high proportion of transient population and Northgate's proximity to the town centre are contributory factors.
29. Despite this, the data dashboard indicates reports of anti-social behaviour have decreased, the result of various interventions including, the environmental work carried out in North Lodge Park, target hardening of residential properties through the safer streets programme, the "In The Know" police initiative and a general presence of police in the area.
30. In addition the rates of domestic abuse related crimes have also shown a decrease, with reported incidents nearly halved in 2021 compared to 2019. The policing team have been doing a lot of work around domestic abuse and the support available to victims.

Health

31. In the early stages of the Northgate Initiative as a result of the pandemic, the Primary Care Network resources were redirected into the vaccination programme. Councillor Ali worked closely with the PCN to encourage residents of Northgate to have the vaccine.
32. Moving forwards the PCN are now delivering the Living Well Programme, which will see a much more holistic approach to health and wellbeing, connecting people to community groups and statutory services for practical and wellbeing support. They will be actively involved in the developing Community Hub.

Economy

33. The 2021/22 funding included within the Towns Fund for the Northgate area was approved by government and received by Darlington Borough Council. This has helped to facilitate further development of proposals associated with the Towns Fund in Northgate. Future work on this programme will include providing housing in the Northgate House / Gladstone Street area and work in Northgate on the outskirts of the town centre.
34. There is a high rate of in work poverty in Northgate with families surviving on low paid, insecure employment (Appendix 2). The Adult learning facility which will be housed in the old Northern Echo building will be promoted directly to the residents of Northgate with an emphasis on upskilling and support in applying for higher paid employment.
35. Youth Employment UK are currently working on the “Youth Friendly Darlington” project working alongside employers across the town to provide employment and training opportunities for young people. Again this will be promoted directly to the young people residing in Northgate to help raise aspirations and job prospects for their future.

Community Hub

36. The Community Hub based at Corporation Road School is in its final stages of planning, adaptations were made to fencing and locking systems over the summer to safeguard the children in school allowing the public to access the hub.
37. The Hub will provide a variety of ‘drop in’ styles sessions for the residents of Northgate allowing access to a number of services which include:
 - 0-19 Child Development Team
 - Citizens Advice
 - Neighbourhood Police
 - Living Well Programme
 - The Bread & Butter Thing
 - Green Doctor
 - Children’s Centre Services
 - Language Classes
 - Learning & Skills
 - DBC Housing Team
 - DBC Revenues & Benefits
 - DBC Private Sector Housing Team
38. It is planned that sessions will begin the week after October Half Term, with publicity and promotion planned leading up to the first week of delivery. Being located in a safe trusted space, it is hoped there will be greater engagement with residents resulting in an increase in take up of services and provision.

Appendix 1 – Northgate Data Dashboard August 2022

	Beacon Indicator	Data for Northgate				Recent trend
		2019	2020	2021	2022	
Children & Education	KS4 Average Attainment 8 score per pupil	38.5				
	KS4 Average Attainment 8 Scores - non FSM pupils	44.0				
	KS4 Average Attainment 8 Scores - FSM pupils	30.8				
	KS4 Average Attainment 8 Scores - attainment gap	13.2				
	Total School Absence Rate	6.0		6.6		↑
	Total Fixed-Term School Exclusions as a % of school population	7.7%	11.4%			↑
	Early Help Numbers	66	52			↓
	Child Protection Plan (CPP) Rate (rates per 10,000 to social services)	90.5	160.8			↑
	Children in Need Rate (per 10,000)	482.4	361.8			↓
	Looked After Child Rate (per 10,000 children under the age of 18)	117.6	84.4			↓
	16-17 year olds NEET or activity unknown	11.2%	13.4%	13.4%		↔
	Environment	Total reported fly tips	396	420	275	
% of fly tips cleared within the Service Level Agreement		78.8%	90.7%	90.9%		↑
Total reported Environmental ASB incidents (per 10,000)		8.5	10.6	6.7		↓
Housing	Energy efficiency - % of households with valid EPC ratings rated C or above	17.2%	18.5%	19.6%		↑
	Households living in "Fuel Poverty"	19.8%				
Crime & Security	Total Reported Crime Offences (per 1,000 population)	213.9	157.5	161.2		↑
	Reported Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Incidents (per 1,000 population)	44.3	47.2	38.5		↓
	Total Reported Domestic Abuse Incidents (April - March each year)	276	219	140		↓
	Rate of domestic abuse-related crimes (per 1,000 population)	57.5	45.6	29.2		↓
Health (Blacketts Medical)	Patients registered at Blacketts Medical Practice as a percentage of total ward	40.3%	38.0%	44.5%		↑
	Smoking prevalence	10.3%	15.4%	17.0%		↑

Darlington	Tees Valley	North East	England	Benchmarking data date
46.6		44.7	44.7	2019
54.2		52.9	53.6	2019
32.5		33.1	35.0	2019
21.7		19.8	18.6	2019
4.4		4.8	4.7	2021
5.7%		5.8%	3.8%	2020
644				Sep-21
95.7		90.5	52.8	2021
380.4		461.2	321.2	2021
120.0		108.0	67.0	2021
5.9%	5.4%	5.7%	5.5%	2021
				2022
				2022
5.3				Dec-21
36.0%		35.0%	39.9%	Jan-22
14.0%	14.4%	14.8%	13.4%	Apr-21
134.0	165.6	130.7	94.3	May-22
30.1	36.3	27.8	17.8	Jul-22
2,342				Dec-21
28.4	22.2	19.2	14.2	Mar-21
				May-22
15.2%	15.0%	14.9%	14.3%	Jul-19

	Beacon Indicator	Data for Northgate				Recent trend
		2019	2020	2021	2022	
	Depression prevalence	14.1%	16.2%	15.8%		↓
Economy	Households on Universal Credit (UC)	12.6%	20.9%	24.8%	30.1%	↑
	Unemployment benefit (JSA and UC)	10.7%	13.5%	10.8%	7.1%	↓
	Youth unemployment benefit (JSA or UC for 18 - 24 year olds)	15.6%	17.3%	12.0%	8.9%	↓
	Universal Credit Claimants in Employment	4.8%	9.6%	9.9%	9.3%	↓
	Children aged 0-19 in relative low-income families	37.9%	49.9%			↑
	Average Personal Debt (Unsecured Loans) per Person aged 18+	£601.69	£514.30	£491.40		↓

Darlington	Tees Valley	North East	England	Benchmarking data date
14.1%	13.6%	13.1%	11.7%	Apr-21
18.7%	22.5%	20.1%	17.5%	May-22
4.2%	4.7%	4.2%	3.8%	Jun-22
6.0%	6.8%	5.2%	4.5%	Feb-22
6.5%	6.9%	6.2%	5.7%	Jun-22
25.9%	28.5%	26.2%	19.4%	2020
£631.10	£625.80	£579.00	£576.00	Sep-21

Appendix 2

Percentage of the population in employment and receiving universal credit (August 2022)

Ward	%
Bank Top and Lascelles Ward	6.8
Brinkburn and Faverdale Ward	2
Cockerton Ward	4.3
College Ward	1.9
Eastbourne Ward	4.9
Harrowgate Hill Ward	2.4
Haughton and Springfield Ward	3.4
Heighington and Coniscliffe Ward	2.1
Hummersknott Ward	0.9
Hurworth Ward	2.5
Mowden Ward	1.3
North Road Ward	6.3
Northgate Ward	7.7
Park East Ward	8.4
Park West Ward	2.6
Pierremont Ward	4.7
Red Hall and Lingfield Ward	4.9
Sadberge and Middleton St George Ward	1.6
Stephenson Ward	6.8

